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This is the author's version 'Cracks' in the (self-constructed?) ghetto walls? Comments on Paul Ward's 'Last man picked' *International Journal of the History of Sport* 30(1), 23-34. 2013. The article has been fully peer-reviewed, though appears here in its pre-publication format in lieu of the publisher's version of record. Author: Malcolm MacLean

### **Cracks in the (self-constructed?) ghetto walls? Comments on Paul Ward's 'Last man picked'**

Paul Ward's essay makes charges against the historical study of sport, or rather the practitioners of the historical study of sport, that are likely to raise some hackles among readers of this journal – although he notes that many of those charges have been made elsewhere by those very same practitioners; we should not be too offended. What is more, he makes these comments as a critical friend with the courage to step outside his realm of expertise and thus risk the opprobrium of our club's insiders: critical friends' observations are important – especially when they help us question our taken-for-granted, as they do in this case. As a result, I both welcome and appreciate Ward's polemic.

As a polemicist Ward should expect a robust response but we need to be careful not to confuse response with defence. The historical study of sport does not need me to defend its shortcomings (not that I do), so this should be read as a contribution to an on-going debate within and around the sub-discipline. Before going any further and despite the appearance in parts of what follows, in many respects Ward is right; as practitioners of the historical study of sport we have tended to be introspective. Often we have justified this by telling ourselves a story about how the 'mainstream' does not take us seriously because it does not take our subject of study seriously. This self-deprecating justification (common in sub-disciplinary studies) has in recent years become less pronounced among historians of sport. Furthermore, Ward's critique based around three elements – quality, the meaning of history and 'presentism' – runs in parallel to recent discussions within the sub-discipline's various professional bodies intended to address the isolation of the historical study of sport from other aspects of the work of historians. Along with Ward however, many of these debates have missed a vital aspect of historical studies of sport – the presence of what John Bale has called 'the canon (and ideology) of pro-sport writing'.<sup>1</sup>

Before turning to these three tropes there are two more questions that Ward raises; liking or disliking sport, and his apparent hierarchy of sub-disciplines. Unlike many in the field, I may be closer to Ward in disliking sport – which isn't to say that I don't

enjoy my occasional outings to events but I am not, in the manner implied by Ward's reference to 'a cultural assumption', a fan. To presume that we study sport because we are fans and that it is this fandom that makes our work 'personally enjoyable' is an error not because many sports historians are not fans but because it risks equating the pleasure of our work with fandom, not with the pleasures of successful scholarly enquiry. Furthermore, in limiting itself to an assumption of 'liking' sport, the presumption fails to recognise the naturalising power of the pro-sport ideology where, in much of what we can recognise as the social and cultural analysis of sport, there remains a taken for granted belief in an essentially good core despite all the problems. I study sport because it is socially, culturally, economically and institutionally important, not because I 'like' it or it is 'good'. My pleasure in the study of sport comes from grappling with a problem, making sense of my evidence, developing a plausible explanation or analysis all the while knowing, in the spirit of E. H. Carr, that as I write it down it is probably going to be found to be wrong not necessarily because others contradict me but because I refine what I am looking for and 'better ... understand the significance and relevance of what I find'.<sup>2</sup> That is, the pleasure comes from problem solving through a dialogue with my peers and internally: experiential evidence tells me that this is the norm in our field.

The presumption of 'fandom' needs further exploration. I work in a sport science programme (as do many other humanities and social science oriented practitioners of the scholarly study of sport) where it is all too common to be asked 'what's your sport?'; I enjoy the surprised and puzzled expressions when I answer 'none', and go on to say that I don't particularly enjoy sport. In the 15 years or so that I have been around the historical study of sport I cannot think of a time when I have been asked that by a fellow historian – suggesting that it is either taken for granted that I like it, or that my fellow practitioners do not care; it may be wishful thinking but I hope it is the latter. Without further analysis, my wishful thinking here is as unreliable as Ward's presumption of fandom or 'liking sport' as the motive for scholarship. It has long puzzled me why we make this assumption of historians of a range of popular cultural practices – sport, music, holidays, cars and so forth – but do not make the same presumption of historians of more 'serious' topics of analysis – fascism, empire or the like. Indeed we only have to look at the work of a writer such as Orlando Figes on the Soviet Union to see how foolish this assumption fandom or 'liking' would be. What is more, this presumption of liking/fandom seems also to function as a way to denigrate the subject and quality of analyses of those popular cultural studies.<sup>3</sup>

That the assumption that those of us engaged in the historical study of sport also 'like' it may be misplaced does not mean the assumption is not, in part, valid or does not have an effect on our collective body of knowledge. The problem of assumed or actual fandom of/finding pleasure in sport means that we often seem to study what interests us, with a risk that this activity may be justified by asserting the importance of what interests us. Unlike a field on a path towards a Kuhnian paradigmatic change, legitimate research questions in the historical study of sport are almost limitless with constraints imposed mainly by access to or availability of source material. This disciplinary paradigmatic openness means that a major driver of areas of study may be researcher interest rather than the disciplinary or other implied 'importance' of the research questions or areas; Ward's suggestion that a skewing of publications towards a small number of men's versions of ball games (football, cricket and rugby) may be related to their crowd-attracting characteristics as well as researcher interest may well be correct. If my slighting of my colleagues in our field parallels Ward's it is because we do not know how much of our work is the product of researcher interest, how much an agreed importance of the topic, and how much to do with the shape and form of our archives or other sources – or for that matter the interaction between these three factors. Without more work (dare I say evidence) casting light on how historians choose their research topics, both of us are inferring and conjecturing on the basis of our presuppositions and interpretations of what we see around us and what we know of our colleagues. As important as the exchange is, it is little more than an anecdotally well-informed pub discussion that I doubt would pass any of our disciplinary tests of rigour. I am sure of one thing though: that British sport history is the product mainly of men – much more so it seems than other fields of cultural and social history – may well be a major factor in our focus on *men's* ball games.

The second problem centres on the question of History's sub-disciplines (I am using the upper case History to suggest some form of disciplinary ideal type – it may not exist but it pervades our ways of talking about what we do). The issue here is what happens to Ward's case if we replace 'the history of sport' in his discussion with other sub-disciplines. Ward makes allusions to this, pointing to practitioners of labour history as academic and non-academic left-wing activists, or military historians as indulging and thereby including in their ranks collectors and hobby re-enactors. In the first instance, in a manner comparable to the presumption of fandom, labour historians' political views seem to make their work unreliable, while in the later hobbyists pollute the field – ironic given Ward's later comment that one of the perks

of being a historian is that our jobs are enjoyable. Ward's picture of the participants in the historical study of sport shows a field blighted by both these shortcomings.

This issue becomes more pronounced if we replace the history of sport with other sub-disciplines, not by analogy as Ward does but as object. Much of what Ward argues is a problem in historical studies of sport – our tendency to talk to ourselves, the focus on the minutiae of past events, the seemingly obfuscatory or obsessive focus on detail at the expense of accessibility by non-specialists – are charges that could equally be directed to other specialist sub-disciplines. It is in these fields that we see debates about whether New Zealand's macro-economic data from the late 1870s and early 1880s point to a depression<sup>4</sup>, whether the 'post' in postcolonial is the same thing as the 'post' in postmodern<sup>5</sup>, or the impact of Alexandra Kollontai's relationship with Pavel Dybenko on the internal politics of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, especially the emergence of the Worker's Opposition group during the Civil War<sup>6</sup>; these important-in-their-fields issues may only be resolved through detailed debate amongst experts even in cases where the answers may be of interest to a broader audience. This is not to say that Ward is wrong in calling on us to be better at translating our work to make it more accessible to wider scholarly audiences.

There is a second tier of issues exposed by shifting the object of the sub-discipline to ask what happens if consider the rhetorical device 'mainstream', noting that Ward's 'mainstream' includes aspects of the discipline that might be considered 'sub-disciplines' by others. His linking of the journals *History*, *Historical Research* and *Economic History Review* suggests a gradation or hierarchy of sub-disciplines in their relation to 'the mainstream' where historical studies of sport are more marginal than economic history; his ante-penultimate paragraph leaves the status of military history less clear. What remains unclear, in Ward's case and in the more general dialogue in the discipline, is what constitutes the 'mainstream'; in most cases it seems to be a synonym of 'non-specialist'. If this is so then we need a better sense of which 'non-specialist'/'mainstream' outlets and historians we are talking about. In publication terms, for instance, there are no doubt big hitting journals, the three Ward notes being among them, but in other national contexts and notably non-English speaking settings the 'mainstream' may look very different. Neither should we be assuming that historical studies of sport do not appear in these 'mainstream' outlets. Locally or more generally important pieces have appeared in a considerable number of 'mainstream' journals despite Ward's implication towards the end of the piece that

this is not happening.<sup>7</sup> The more interesting question may be not why so few pieces from our field appear in these journals, but whether this is because pieces are submitted and rejected, or not submitted in the first place – and if the latter, why?<sup>8</sup>

This criticism is not to be read as suggesting that Ward is alone in deploying ‘mainstream’ in such an unspecific but ideologically powerful way; this is a common discursive trope in many sub-disciplines, not only history. There were similar debates in cultural studies in the 1990s which ran alongside the attempts to define it as a discipline in its own right rather than an insurgent critique across a range of the humanities and social science practices: debates played out at the ‘Cultural Studies Now and in the Future’ conference at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1990.<sup>9</sup> The criticism is directed more generally at our collective use of ‘mainstream’ without being clear about it; it is a term that has been used regularly in the on-going work in the British Society for Sports History exploring the Society’s strategic orientation and programme. If as a field we are going to engage more actively with a ‘mainstream’ of historical studies, and even more so if we are to develop a ‘political’ programme to do so then we need to have a collective and explicit understanding of what we mean. Does, for instance, publishing sport-related papers in tourism history journals count as the mainstream – or is that just another form of ‘specialist’ outlet, even though not sport history? In short, what is a ‘mainstream’ – is it one powerful current flowing across a scholarly landscape or is it more like a braided river of multiple, overlapping and interweaving channels?

Turning now to Ward’s three specific criticisms: a lack of quality, confusion over what counts as history derived from an excessive introspective focus on ‘data’ and an elision of the past and present which becomes the tendency to ‘presentism’. ‘Presentism’ does not encapsulate the harshness of Ward’s statement that as a group we ‘elide the past and the present’; Ward charges the sub-discipline with a tendency to anachronism – for serious historians this is a capital crime. In each of these three charges we find ourselves running in parallel to debates in other disciplines (including the theoretical physicist Sheldon’s contempt for Leonard’s experimental work, let alone Wolowitz’s work as an engineer<sup>10</sup>).

Starting with the problem of quality, many would likely agree that the field ‘could do better’ in the euphemistic language of the report card – although Ward’s statement that work lacking ‘an academic framework and historiographical knowledge’ that would be ‘rejected out of hand’ by ‘most mainstream [there is that word again] history

journals ... seems treated with indulgence' in sports history is hyperbolic provocation given his conflation of scholarly journals and edited collections of essays. I'd be more than happy to discuss in more detail and in some respects might agree if the waters of Ward's charge were not muddled by this conflation. Practitioners in the field are aware of the tension between maintenance of scholarly standards (quality) and the 'democratic' need to provide information to the broad audience with an interest in the history of sport. In recognition of this tension, for instance, both the British and Australian societies for sports history publish bulletins which often contain short papers, reports and similar documents that are not suited to their blind peer reviewed scholarly journals.

An important issue is the link between 'quality', profile and citation indexes. None of the major sports history journals currently appears in Arts and Humanities or Social Sciences citation indexes. There are developments in this area that hold out some hope for change. *The International Journal of the History of Sport* has recently been listed with Thompson-Reuters, *The Journal of Sport History* is about to apply for listing, and there has been some consideration given to an application for *Sport in History*.<sup>11</sup> Anecdotal and impressionistic evidence points to an increasing number of historians of sport making use of platforms such as Google Scholar (as more articles are included in Google Scholar, anecdotal evidence suggests that citation rates are increasing), personal or institutional websites or social media forms including academic.edu. As practitioners in our field we need to develop an on-line presence that could enhance citation rates and journal profiles as well as make use of, or put pressure on our universities to develop, institutional repositories. Developments such as the British Library's digital thesis repository (EThOS) seem to be helping to raise graduate student and new scholar profiles, but as a sub-discipline we have not adequately engaged with these developments and have been slow to rise to the opportunities digital media offer. Although there is often a call for those most known in the 'sub-discipline' to publish in the 'mainstream', there is seldom a call for the 'mainstream' to contribute to the 'sub-discipline', in the UK the annual 'Historians on Sport' conference at De Montfort University is a notable exception.

Ward is right to raise the challenges to the sub-discipline posed by the upcoming Research Excellence Framework (REF) in the UK noting that there are similar assessments of research 'quality' in many other national contexts. Ward's passing reference to quality and impact is, however, only part of the debate. The REF places pressure on us to publish promiscuously; those of us in science-oriented



programmes even more so when our managers and assessors look at the number of outputs some of our colleagues who produce multi-authored experimentally-based work generate. The issue is particularly acute for 'new' or young scholars who are not only under pressure to publish for REF-purposes but also to establish their profile in the field, feature in university marketing material, enhance their 'impact' where that is often read as 'impact beyond the academy', help add to student satisfaction and build National Student Survey scores that feed into the Key Information Sets (KIS) data to move their university up the league tables and recruit more students. Writing, as I do, from the squeezed middle of the UK university hierarchy, the pressure is enormous and the cost of failure may not be just our job but if our managers are to be believed our university.

A more insidious and equally problematic issue is the proliferation of journals across the field; there is significant growth not only in the number of journals, leading to increasing (sub)specialisation, but also in the number of issues per year leading to more and more pages that need to be filled. A small number of publishing conglomerates now dominate the academic publishing market (including this journal), conglomerates with a business model that requires market, not scholarly, innovations – new journals or greater numbers of issues – that allow new subscription charges to be levied and even larger proportions of library resources budgets to be dedicated to licenses to read even more on-line journals. It is no shocking insight to note that this business model is as much or more of a threat to quality than indulgence of 'amateurs, participants and spectators', few if any of whom publish in these journals. Many journal editors and officers of scholarly societies who deal with these publishing conglomerates expend considerable effort resisting the pressure to produce more issues but in doing so come up against the imperatives of the business models of these corporations. Furthermore, many of us also provide free labour to enhance these corporations' profits by serving on editorial boards, refereeing papers and otherwise acting as quality enhancement and assurance practitioners, even while our peers such as Ward see this as indulging mediocrity.

We need to revisit and review our business and publication models, especially but not only those of us active in scholarly societies publishing journals. As the debates about open access continue new options emerge, including post-publication review and refereeing (many already provide pre-publication drafts for comment via circulation to friends, peers and colleagues, on our own websites or other on-line outlets) or new models of authorship, while the 'pay-to-submit' business models

being promoted by corporations and UK government policies make a mockery of 'open access'.<sup>12</sup> Working towards new models of publication may include campaigning within our Universities with a view to a greater role for university presses to focus on their own staff – the decision in 2009 by the University of Michigan to make its press part of its library may result in a new business model that is more oriented to service than profit.<sup>13</sup> Closer to home, as publishers of academic journals we should be looking to other ways to break the corporate pressure that risks undermining quality – Creative Commons licenses, especially the use of Attribution-Share Alike licenses, may be a place to start if for no other reason than being a fundamental challenge to our employers' and corporate publishers' efforts to privatise knowledge and further enclose the Commons.<sup>14</sup> The failure of our scholarly societies to confront these issues despite some efforts is a serious shortcoming on our part although other disciplines have taken up the challenge.<sup>15</sup>

Ward's second charge, that we are not sure what we mean by history and are obsessed by data rather than crafting its application for non-specialist users also requires consideration. Although generally unhelpful, the parallel with military history is useful in the sense that although we are engaged in a broad historical exploration of a cultural practice the significant elements of that study may be singular events – the widely analysed occupation of Chunuk Bair, lasting only a few hours, being symbolically if not militarily important in the nine month campaign on the Gallipoli Peninsular in 1915. In a similar way, whether or not the ball crossed the goal line in a football (soccer) match between England and Germany in 1966 is to all intents and purposes meaningless in the big picture, but has become a fact of significance in British popular culture and national myth making.<sup>16</sup> Where Ward (echoing Martin Johnes) is right is that historical analysts of sport have not been as successful as we should have been in translating these moments into narratives useful to scholars whose primary interest is not sport. In Britain, our principle focus has been on drawing non-academic researchers into networks and writing for broader audiences. We have been less successful at writing for other academic audiences – although we can cite historical analyses of sport in a number of national contexts that have found those broader readerships including, for instance, work by Emma Griffin, Michael Oriard or Colin Tatz.<sup>17</sup> It is notable that one of the most widely cited history of sport texts, A. J. Mangan's *Athleticism*, is as much a piece of educational history as it is sports history.<sup>18</sup> The question of reaching out to non-specialists, however, must be countered by the need of non-specialists to recognise the range of activity in the field and to move beyond references to a small number of, often dated, foundational texts.

There is a broader point rooted in the genealogy of the historical study of sport. Mark Dyreson distinguishes between sport history and the history of sport to identify a dual developmental path, the former grounded in physical education studies and the later emerging from History-the-discipline.<sup>19</sup> Dyreson identifies key aspects of sport history by pointing to one of its early practitioners, Edward M Hartwell, who 'used his histories to promote his field and garner public and governmental support. He employed the study of history of American fitness to proclaim that the nation had neglected the scientific study and rational education of the body'.<sup>20</sup> Dyreson then finds key elements of sport history in a 1917 article by Fredrick L Paxson who argued that "no one can probe national character, personal conduct, public opinion' nor any other dimension of contemporary American civilisation without taking account of the 'rise of sport".<sup>21</sup> A similar dual developmental path may be seen in most national settings, although in some a third parallel strand may be seen in 'Olympic studies'. There is tension in many contexts between those scholars grounded in History and those in kinesiology or other forms of sports studies, broadly defined. The sources of that tension are manifold but claims to relevance on the one hand (sport history) often confront uncertainty/plausibility and rules of disciplinary rigour on the other.

One key thing is missing from Dyreson's distinction, although he notes it. There are some in the history of sport who have argued for a closer focus on sport *qua* sport: to step beyond the "and society' approach to the history of sport ... [because sport is] important in and of itself'.<sup>22</sup> Dyreson mistakenly suggests that this is a call for a focus on sport history as identified by his classification.<sup>23</sup> His source for this point is Douglas Booth, who draws on some of these writers to argue that 'historians do not work in one framework and that practitioners choose the paradigm best suited to answering a specific question.'<sup>24</sup> Ward would have been well advised to take account of Booth's subsequent comment that as practitioners we draw on internal and external perspectives. As an undergraduate in (British style) social anthropology, one of the first methodological points I learned was the difference between the emic and the etic, between aspects of analysis that drew on perspectives indigenous to the groups being studied and those brought to the study by the analyst. An advantage that historians of sport who also like sport have is that these indigenous reference points and perspectives – those emic codes – come more easily than they do to those of us outside that culture; one of the challenges these insiders face is developing critical distance and ensuring the effective use of the etic codes, although both grapple with the demands of this dialectic.<sup>25</sup> That Ward misses this genealogical

distinction and the emic-etic tension does not undermine his more general point about accessibility by non-specialist historians – as sports scholars we have need to make sure our ‘inclusiveness’ agenda reaches out to History’s other sub-disciplines, although the presumption that this is one-way flow is irksome – but it does weaken his concern about scholars who like their subject too much.

Ward’s third charge, a tendency to ‘presentism’ verging on anachronism, is the subject of a much wider methodological and philosophical debate in the humanities and social sciences. In the current context of commercialising of higher education enhances the tension between ‘relevance’ and ‘impact’, both often depicted as related to extra-academic factors, rather than relevance to, or impact in, our ‘parent’ disciplines. Central to this debate has been the presence of the analyst in any research project alongside the prevalence of ‘fashionable’ research topics. That we should study the past in its own terms is a tenet of our discipline, although the questions we ask are almost certainly informed by our contemporary concerns; the tension between the emic and etic – the risk of presentism that if uncontrolled may become anachronism – is therefore inherent in our work from the moment of its conceptualisation. Ward sidesteps this tension to return to his problem of the researcher who likes the subject of their work, but without clear evidence or examples of work that presumes by ‘making leaps in chronology and argument’ that events of a century or more ago explain a contemporary cultural practice it is hard to judge whether his critique is fair or not. The problem of historical analyses of sport that seek to explain the present is not unique to our sub-discipline, which is not to say that this teleological reasoning is acceptable. The problem is becoming more significant as the demand for ‘impact’ becomes more powerful. Without knowing how to best build impact in the discipline or consider impact on whom or what, the risk that relevance may become conflated with ‘impact’ thereby leading to teleology does not seem likely to be mitigated. Once again, Ward has pointed to an issue we need to grapple with even though he has misdiagnosed its source as lying in ‘fandom’ rather than the material context of contemporary higher education.

In focussing on this risk of ‘presentism’ as the outcome of our seemingly ubiquitous and polluting fandom Ward has missed the much more significant point that he might have picked up on had he considered the impact on the history of sport of anti-sport writing – not just as considered in Bale’s analysis, but also the kind we see in essays such as Julie Myerson’s *Not A Games Person* or Marc Perelman’s *Barbaric Sport*<sup>26</sup> although I note Perelman’s book was published in English after Ward wrote his piece.

Alongside the risk of fandom of and participation in sport making it more difficult to challenge the pro-sport ideology is not the problem of presentism but that of being limited to a narrow set of questions. That is, there is the significant problem of the questions we do not ask. There is too little in the way of comparative work that explores sport-related historical questions in a transnational or cross-border perspective, although the recent 'Sport in Modern Europe – Perspectives on a Comparative Cultural History' project is a good example of what could be done.<sup>27</sup> There is only a small body of recent work, other than syncretic overviews some of which include original research,<sup>28</sup> that explores sport as a distinctive form of leisure. The limiting range of our questions means, for instance, that I cannot produce evidence to rebut Ward's argument that our focus on sports is the product of crowds – it may be – but it is also likely to be the result of the way that sports' institutions and economic power, as seen in the sports club, exacerbate its difference from other forms of leisure. A notable gap in global sports historiography is our failure to address the sports club *as an institution*. We have some very good studies of individual clubs and federated institutions, and yet we know very little about sports clubs *per se* despite them being a major element of civil society alongside churches, trade unions and political parties all of which have been the subject of extensive historical research.

Ward may be right that his book about Britishness might have been better had it not isolated sport into a separate chapter but integrated it into a wider thematic discussion of leisure practices and other nationally, regionally and locally specific identity practices. Elsewhere books as different as Robert Graves and Alan Hodges' *The Long Weekend* or Elizabeth Cohen's *Making a New Deal* have a focus on leisure activities, and for Graves and Hodges sport, and in weaving these throughout their texts these authors accentuate a range of identities associated with leisure, consumption and ways of being.<sup>29</sup> Some of these questions are stylistic, but the drive to keep sports history out of its ghetto is to be celebrated. One of the ways sport historians have tried to break down the ghetto walls is in setting out to write for broader audiences: I cite four of many examples. Tony Mason's *Passion for the People*, a history of South American football, is published by Verso and directed to a non-specialist audience.<sup>30</sup> Tony Collins' study of rugby league has produced scholarly work that has broad popular appeal while also writing for more popular audiences.<sup>31</sup> In other contexts, Simon Martin's *Sport Italia* is a history of modern Italy told through a focus on sport and specifically intended for a broad audience (and winner in 2012 of the British Society for Sports History's book prize).<sup>32</sup> Likewise,

Linda Peavy and Ursula Smith have told the story of the Fort Shaw Indian School girl's basketball team at the 1904 St Louis World's Fair in several contexts – including a scholarly article in this journal, a general history from a university press and through involvement in a PBS television show on the topic.<sup>33</sup> However we may rate the success of these books, they barely scratch the surface of high quality histories of sport for broader audiences.

In conclusion, I need to clarify what I meant when I said at the outset that I agree with much of Ward's case. Is it the claim that we indulge 'amateurs, participants and spectators' publishing weak histories? No, I reject that claim if it applies only to our peer reviewed journals, although we could do better. Is it the suggestion that we need to address broader audiences? Yes, my agreement there is wholehearted, although Ward needs to recognise that the market is full of hagiographic texts of the kind he condemns as lacking academic frameworks and historiographical knowledge, while there are very many good 'popular' histories that demonstrate a good grasp of both these. Is it the claim that sport historians need to craft our work so it is useful for other historians or other disciplines? Again, I wholeheartedly agree but note also that other historians need to recognise sport history as a specialist sub-discipline in its own right that they need to do some work to get into; going to the footy of whichever code, watching the golf, soaking up a summer day at ('Glorious') Goodwood is not enough in the same way as choosing which supermarket I should shop at is not enough to grant me access to economic history. Furthermore, 'mainstream' scholars who do look to sports history need to treat the sub-discipline seriously: it is not enough to cite Richard Holt's *Sport and the British*, Wray Vamplew's *Pay Up and Play the Game* or Mangan's *Athleticism*, each of which is over twenty years old (in the case of *Athleticism* over 30 years) as if they embody contemporary research in the field. Equally, economic historians would be outraged if I were to cite Henri Pirenne, Carlo Cipolla or Rodney Hilton as if they provide up to date evidence for feudal Europe, the 'Industrial Revolution', or the transition debate. There are any number of extremely good sport history texts that do reach out to broader audiences within and beyond the discipline but we also need the place, space and room to have our own in-house technical debates, refine the details and nuances of our field, squabble over those obsessive details that are only meaningful to specialists and develop our knowledge so our texts with broader appeal carry weight. That is, we need this place so that we can anticipate critic's objections, treat accurately the we work critique, avoid internal inconsistencies and inferences that are not inevitable, and ensure that our claims are well supported and based on data (evidence) that is

neither doubtful nor poor quality – that is, so we produce high quality work that passes the key tests of rigour historians ascribe to.

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<sup>1</sup> Bale, *Anti-Sport Sentiments in Literature*, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Carr, *What is History?* 28.

<sup>3</sup> See Grossberg, 'Is There a Fan in the House?'

<sup>4</sup> Hawke, *The Making of New Zealand*.

<sup>5</sup> Appiah, 'Is the "Post-" in "Postcolonial" the "Post-" in "Postmodern"?''

<sup>6</sup> Porter, *Alexandra Kollontai*.

<sup>7</sup> Consider, for instance, Stoddart, 'Sport, Cultural Imperialism, and Colonial Response in the British Empire'; Adair *et al* 'Playing Fields Through to Battle Fields'; Booth 'Beyond History'; Cronin, 'Playing Away from Home'.

<sup>8</sup> In notes supplied for the conference that led to this issue, Joe Smith, editor of *History* from 1999-2010 advised that he received only one submission specifically on a sporting topic (cricket) but it was not published, and two submissions dealing with political, economic and social, rather than sporting, aspects of hunting, one of which was published. A small number



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of books were provided for review, and some reviews were published. This low level of submissions is significant given that the journal's remit is historical topics from the medieval period to the present. I am grateful to Duncan Stone for supplying me with Smith's notes.

<sup>9</sup> Grossberg, Nelson and Treichler. *Cultural Studies*.

<sup>10</sup> For those who know the CBS show *The Big Bang Theory*.

<sup>11</sup> I am grateful to Duncan Stone for forwarding me comments by Wray Vamplew that have contributed to this and several other points about journal editorial decisions. Neither Duncan nor Wray are responsible for my comments.

<sup>12</sup> This is a recurring issue in on-line discussions of open access – see for instance the 'Impact of Social Sciences' blog at <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/>.

<sup>13</sup> Fitzpatrick, *Planned Obsolescence*, 167.

<sup>14</sup> See Benenson 'On the Fungability and Necessity of Cultural Freedom' for a useful discussion of the use of Creative Commons Licenses

<sup>15</sup> Consider, for instance, the current (at the time of writing) debates in the British Academy, the British Sociological Association and elsewhere about the *Accessibility, sustainability, excellence*.

<sup>16</sup> This myth-making is explored in a wide variety of sources, including recently Silk & Francombe, 'All these Years of Hurt'.

<sup>17</sup> Griffin, *England's Revelry*; Griffin, *Blood Sport*; Oriard, *Sporting With the Gods*; Oriard, *Reading Football*; Tatz, *Obstacle Race*.

<sup>18</sup> Mangan, *Athleticism*.

<sup>19</sup> Dyreson, 'Sport History and the History of Sport in North America'.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 407.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, 406, citing Frederic L Paxson, 'The Rise of Sport' *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 4 (1917): 143-68 (quotation from p 168).

<sup>22</sup> Taylor, *The Leaguers*, xiv (emphasis in original).

<sup>23</sup> Dyreson, *ibid*, 411, fn 1.

<sup>24</sup> Booth, *The Field*, 185.

<sup>25</sup> Headland, Pike, and Harris, *Emics and Etics*.

<sup>26</sup> Myerson, *Not a Games Person*; Perelman *Barbaric Sport*.

<sup>27</sup> There have been a number of 'outputs' from this project including special issues of sport-specific and non-sport specific journals and Tomlinson, Young and Holt. *Sport and the Transformation of Modern Europe*. See [www.sport-in-europe.group.cam.ac.uk](http://www.sport-in-europe.group.cam.ac.uk) for further information.

<sup>28</sup> For instance, Borsay, *A History of Leisure*; Hill, *Sport, Leisure and Culture*.

<sup>29</sup> Graves, and Hodges, *The Long Weekend*; Cohen, *Making a New Deal*.

<sup>30</sup> Mason, *Passion for the People*.

<sup>31</sup> Collins, *Rugby's Great Split*; Collins *Rugby League in Twentieth Century Britain*; Collins, *1895 and all that...*.

<sup>32</sup> Martin, *Sport Italia*.

<sup>33</sup> Peavy, and Smith, "'Leav[ing] the White[s]...Far Behind Them"; subsequently also in Brownell, S. (ed) *The 1904 Anthropology Days and Olympic Games: Sport, Race, and American Imperialism* Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press; Peavy, and Smith, *Full-Court Quest*. See also the PBS documentary *Playing for the World* to which Peavy and Smith contributed.